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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies February 6 continued to focus news coverage on the island's sagging economy and the Taiwan government's efforts to fight the soaring unemployment rate, and on the ongoing probe into former President Chen Shui-bian's legal cases. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed piece in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," written by a Taiwan-born but U.S.-based freelance commentator, discussed U.S.-China-Taiwan relations and concluded that "if the U.S., Japan and the EU continue to engage China without taking substantive measures to steer the country in the right direction..., then the rise of China would most likely bring great conflict and misfortune for mankind."

"What Does the Future Hold for China?"

Li Thian-hok, freelance commentator based in Pennsylvania, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (2/6):

"... China's increasingly interdependent relations with the US and Washington's deferential stance toward Beijing serve to boost the legitimacy of the People's Republic of China. US business in general tends to support China's authoritarian status quo. A good example is the assistance US companies such as Yahoo, Cisco, Google and Microsoft has rendered the CCP in clamping down on Internet access. ... Whether China will democratize and follow the path of peaceful development or resort to military adventure and expansionism is unknowable. However, if the US, Japan and the EU continue to engage China without taking substantive measures to steer the country in the right direction, but instead keep on feeding its nationalist pride and help build up its wealth and military power because of commercial interests, then the rise of China would most likely bring great conflict and misfortune for mankind. For Taiwan, the best course of action is to resist China's pressure to surrender its sovereignty and democracy, boost Taiwan's national security both in terms of hard power and psychological defenses and avoid entanglement with China's coming bloody internal strife or external military adventure."

YOUNG